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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN COLLEGE--A SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOME WORKPAPERS.

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Foreign Language Teaching in College: A Set of Recommendations and Some Workpapers

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Foreign Language Teaching in College: A Set of Recommendations and Some Workpapers

THE FOLLOWING recommendations and workpapers were written in connection with a two-day conference in New York, 1961, held by the Modern Language Association in partial fulfillment of a contract with the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

THE USE OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

The First Year. We urge that students use only the foreign language in class, and that the instructor use English only in certain types of pattern drills, and in cases where an occasional English word for clarification will be more economical and time-saving than a long paraphrase in the foreign language.

The Second Year. An FL department should provide serious training in all four skills (hearing, speaking, reading, writing) at every level. However, in the present transitional period between traditional and audio-lingual courses and until four-skill texts are prepared for the second year, it is inevitable that with traditionally prepared students concepts may upon occasion be more profitably discussed in English.

In literature courses in which the students come from a heterogeneous background of foreign language training, the instructor will need to proceed with caution and to devise very simple questions about plot, character, motivation, and so on. If necessary, he can even supply the answers at first. But if the instructor provides the students with mimeographed questions and uses texts published abroad for native speakers of the foreign language, it is quite possible to get the students to prepare assignments in the foreign language and, eventually, to carry on in the foreign language unself-consciously.

THE FL MAJOR

The student should be thoroughly grounded in the four skills and examinations should be designed to test proficiency in all of them. He should have an opportunity to use these skills constantly in the advanced courses in the major. He should study the foreign literature, broadly interpreted; and he should also work in the foreign culture and civilization, embracing the wider viewpoints of geography, history, politics, social organization, and religion. This instruction should be conducted substantially in the foreign language, providing the student with practice in oral and writing fluency. The program should include an introductory study of the phonology and structure of the language. From the start, the program should be carefully integrated within itself and also with study of such cognate fields as English literature, history, political science, philosophy, and the arts. Such a program, covering the four undergraduate years, should include from 24 to 36 hours or more of courses beyond the second college year, or equivalent proficiency and knowledge.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE COLLEGE TEACHER OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The college teacher of foreign languages, when he begins his career, should possess the following qualifications:

1) near-native proficiency in the four language skills;
2) knowledge of the literature and other aspects of the foreign culture and civilization, attained in part by residence in the foreign country;
3) knowledge of linguistics, particularly in its application to the language he will teach;
4) information on teaching methods and materials;
5) the experience of having taught the foreign language and literature under close supervision and guidance.

THE PROBLEM OF TIME

Basic to FL course and curriculum improvements is continued consideration of the disparity between the time necessary for mastery of the four basic skills and the time ordinarily allotted to it. It is of interest to note that specialized schools such as the Foreign Service Institute and the Army Language School consider as minimum approximately four times the time usually available within a two-semester framework. But increases in allotted time are now limited by the problems of obtaining matching instructional manpower in the face of increasing enrollments, and such increases in allotted time, of themselves, do not always guarantee a higher level of achievement.

Experimentation is being conducted under a number of auspices which may provide new solutions adaptable to current programs. These experiments involve careful step-by-step programming of the basic skills, with learning activities carried on at least in part through the use of electromechanical devices. It may well be possible that the results of such experimentation can help to cope with the increasingly heterogeneous levels of competence, deriving both from different learning rates and diverse training, by suggesting ways in which the student can progress at his own rate. Further, the results of such experimentation may point the way to combinations of instructional practices which could yield mastery of the basic skills in less time than that regarded as essential by the specialized schools. In any case, we recommend that such experimentation be encouraged, and the results given earnest and critical consideration.

STUDY ABROAD

A year's study in a foreign country can both broaden and deepen the education of an American student. Whether this period should be the junior year or a post-graduate year will depend upon the student's background, language preparation, purposes, and field of specialization. Only the most serious students should undertake such a program of study, especially in view of the overcrowded conditions prevailing in the universities of most countries today.

FL DEGREE REQUIREMENT

Students are now beginning to enter college with longer and better preparation in modern FLs. Colleges may therefore, normally without increasing the *time* devoted to language study in college, restate their degree requirements in a way that is more consonant with the aims of a liberal education.

Such a requirement should include (1) a proficiency in the four language skills equivalent to the achievement of a student at the end of the first two years (or four semesters) in college, and (2) a year of study in a foreign literature on a third-year college level.

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USING THE FL IN THE CLASSROOM: TWENTY QUESTIONS

BY JULIAN E. HARRIS, *University of Wisconsin*

1. At what level should the FL be used in classes?

At all levels.

2. To what extent?

Substantially all the time.

3. How?

In hearing and comprehending, speaking, reading, and writing.

4. When do you begin using the FL?

The first day of the course.

5. How can you use the FL before the students learn a little grammar and vocabulary?

You teach the students a simple dialog in the FL; then you use the phrases of the dialog with the students and have them use the phrases with each other.

6. How can you teach a dialog in an FL to students who do not know what the words mean?

You tell them in English what the dialog is about and you explain what each phrase means as you teach it. Then the students associate the sound and meaning of each phrase in the FL with the other phrases of the dialog and they keep using the phrases until they really master them. Thus they learn what the words mean and how they are used at the same time.

7. If you are going to devote so much time to practice in hearing and speaking, why not just use the direct method?

If by the "direct method" you mean teaching an FL without any use of the mother tongue, beginning with the names of objects in the classroom and proceeding thereafter with objects and pictures brought into the class, it is simply too slow for intelligent adolescents and adults. From the very beginning, the emphasis should be on understanding and using complete and authentic patterns of the FL. As a matter of fact, it is easier to teach American students to say "Comment allez-vous?" correctly and with a proper rhythm and intonation than it is to teach them to "pronounce" "la table" or "la pomme" correctly. And in learning this question, the students get a fairly realistic idea of the sound of five French vowels and six French consonants—among other things.

It should no longer be a question of this or that method or approach. Many good FL teachers have always taught the four skills effectively, regardless of the method or approach with which they may have been identified. Let us therefore admit our great indebtedness to them and let us borrow from them all the good teaching and learning techniques they have discovered. But instead of arguing about who first used this or that teaching device, let us try to learn which procedure is most effective at each moment of each level of FL instruction. What is important today is how to teach effectively. Invoking theories and repeating slogans—old or new—will get us nowhere.

8. But isn't it better if FL students never hear a word of English?

Whether students hear English words or not, they will automatically think "apple" when they are shown an apple or a picture of an apple. It is of course possible to teach students the word for "apple" in the FL without having the English word uttered audibly in the classroom. But the question is to find the *best* way to teach.

If the teacher utters an entire phrase in the FL such as: "Nous avons des pommes, des poires, et des bananes" and murmers "We have apples, pears, and bananas," there is no lost motion, very little English, and, more important, the students can repeat all nine words a dozen times in about the same amount of time it takes for them to grasp with confidence the sound and meaning of "la pomme" alone; and meanwhile their effort is devoted to distinguishing in the FL between "des pommes," "des poires," et "des bananes"—instead of trying to associate the word "la pomme" with the object on the picture shown.

One of the basic principles of the structural linguists is to compare and contrast the sounds, the intonation patterns, the structural patterns of the mother tongue and those of the FL. It is possible that they devote too much time to linguistic analysis in their teaching of FLs; but no one can deny that it has always been both interesting and instructive to FL students to compare details of the FL with the mother tongue.

Adults and adolescents do not learn as children do and they should not be treated as if they were children. The sooner the students begin to use meaningful phrases that are authentic patterns of the FL, the sooner they really begin to develop a sense of the language. The way to avoid having students associate words in the FL with English words (subvocally, of course) is to give them something more interesting and challenging to do.

9. Well, how *do* you teach a dialog in the FL before you teach the students any words?

Let's take a specific example of a dialog in French. One of my colleagues and I wrote it in 1943 and I think quite a number of students will testify that it is an effective way to begin.

La Concierge: Bonjour, monsieur
John Hughes: Bonjour, madame
etc.

You tell the students in English what the dialog is about and you explain the meaning of each phrase as they repeat it. Before asking them to repeat the first phrase, you tell them to listen as attentively as possible to what you say. Then you say, several times: Bonjour, monsieur. Point out that the phrase has four short, equally stressed syllables. Tap out the rhythm: tóc, tóc, tóc, tóc. Then repeat once more the greeting and have the students say: Bonjour, monsieur; tóc, tóc, tóc, tóc: Bonjour, monsieur.

For the present, it is better not to talk about the pronunciation of the FL, because anything you will say will be misunderstood. A little later, when you *do* teach the sounds of the FL, it will be in terms of known words in the FL.

Students who have seen the word "monsieur" may say something like monsoof. If this happens, you have to explain that the word is pronounced [mesjø] in two short, equal syllables. Showing them how the pronunciation is indicated in IPA symbols is also helpful (But you don't have to teach the entire IPA Alphabet. Would anyone be so foolish as to try to learn the entire key to pronunciation in an English dictionary before venturing to look up a word?)

A quick exercise on the uvular R, the kind that will be found in any good book on pronunciation, will teach *some* of the students to produce the sound at once. The others should be told to omit the R entirely until they *can* pronounce it correctly and that they must *never* substitute an American "r" for the French [R].

To learn to say "Bonjour, monsieur" is probably the most difficult step in the entire process of learning French: it is not surprising if it takes eight to ten minutes!

When most of the students can say "Bonjour, monsieur," you then say: "Dites bonjour à M. Hughes"—with a gesture towards an imaginary M. Hughes—and most of them will say "Bonjour, monsieur." If you repeat the command a time or two, they will all understand and act accordingly.

The next step is to teach the phrase: "Bonjour, madame." This will be much easier; but it will still be necessary to tap out four equal syllables so that no one will slight the first syllable of *madame* or sing out the greeting with an American intonation.

While they are learning not to say mud-dom, they learn almost incidentally to bring out a clear French [a]—another Copernican step.

Then the rest of the phrases of the dialog are taken up in turn. Each phrase is easier to learn than the preceding one because the students bring to each new phrase a better grasp of the pronunciation, accent, and intonation of the FL.

A little English from time to time is relaxing and can be very instructive. For example, you can say:

Tell me good morning. (Bonjour, monsieur.)
Tell me hello. (Bonjour, monsieur.)
Tell me, formally, "Good morning, sir."
(Bonjour monsieur.)
Tell me hello, assuming it is 4:00 P.M.
(Bonjour, monsieur.)

In this way, the students learn in depth—and avoid such nonsense as: "*Bonjour really* means *good day*." This sort of exercise should, of course, always be very brief—a matter of some 30 seconds.

Before the end of the first hour, the students may look at the phrases of the dialog and repeat them after the teacher, making a great effort to say them correctly *in spite of the strange spelling*. They should be cautioned to use the French text only for reference at first and *not* to learn to spell any words for at least a few weeks.

10. But doesn't it spoil the students' pronunciation to see all those silent letters?

Some of the most vociferous experts insist that students should not see any word written in the FL for a few days, weeks, months, or even semesters; but as they do not agree as to the desirable length of this "blind period," there is no way of knowing just what they recommend—let alone of trying to follow their advice. It is true that the natural reaction of Americans to a phrase that is written with "English letters" is to think of the English sounds. And this is indeed a hazard. But seeing phrases in an FL—even in French—has far more advantages for adult literates than it has disadvantages. No matter how much you insist that the students must not see the FL, many of them are going to try to write down the phrases they hear so they can refer to them at will. You can not force an intelligent adult literate to give up the immensely useful gift of literacy. Why try? There are five possible ways to confront the situation: (1) to provide an IPA transcription—which would be confusing, (2) to provide a phonemic transcription—which would be even more confusing, (3) to use a bastard English transcription something like bone-zhur muh-shuh—which would be ridiculous, (4) to let each student devise his own system—which would be both ridiculous and irresponsible, and (5) to show students how to use the spelling of the FL intelligently. Even French spelling!

All things considered, conventional French spelling is the most direct, adult, and practical way of writing the language—at least for people who will soon want to read in French. Besides, most high school and college students have seen French phrases in books and magazines for years and they are eager to see as well as hear and speak the language. It is simply silly to imagine our students will not see any words in the FL until we tell them to do so: if we don't give them good books and teach them how to use them intelligently, many of them will buy bad books and use them unintelligently.

11. Couldn't we avoid the disadvantages of letting students see the text if we used tapes?

What sort of tapes? Tapes are like the miracle drugs: in order to be effective, they must be made by experts, prescribed by experts, and administered by experts. It is naïve to imagine tapes are like the patent medicines that are guaranteed to cure whatever is wrong with you.

Certainly you can avoid using printed texts temporarily if you have tapes that provide the listener with a variety of properly constructed learning exercises. In fact, that is probably the best way to get students to do their homework effectively. We are just beginning to learn how to teach with records, tapes, and TV and we will undoubtedly learn a great deal more; but meanwhile, a combination of a good teacher, good printed material, and good recorded material is better, surely, than either of the three used separately.

12. When should students begin to read the FL?

After about four weeks of intensive practice in hearing and speaking, the students can safely begin to read very simple texts—the kind of thing they have learned to understand aurally. They are eager to read, and reading brings a new dimension to their study. When they begin to read, however, it is necessary to make a new effort to improve their pronunciation, accent, and intonation because they tend to react to the printed page as if it were English—until they are taught to react otherwise. Teaching students to read in the FL is quite as important as teaching them to understand and speak. Fortunately it is not so difficult, because (1) they know (or can quickly learn) that reading means understanding by eye the meaning of what is written and (2) having learned to read in English, they know (or can quickly learn) that they don't have to be able to define every word in a paragraph in order to get at its meaning.

13. Don't they have to study grammar before they begin to read in the FL?

They will have been studying grammar for several weeks and they will have mastered some of the basic differences between English and the FL. They learn grammar just as they learn dialogs: by hearing, understanding, and using authentic patterns of the language. The difference is that in grammar lessons, the phrases are grouped (or regrouped) so as to make clear a principle of grammar. You never have any trouble getting college students to study principles of grammar: all adults go in for analysis and generalization. If anything, they place too much confidence in such activity. Indeed, one reason why it is important to teach practical grammar early is to keep students from making phony generalizations for themselves.

14. Well, how do you use the FL in a reading lesson?

Just as in teaching the dialogs, you have to give the students an idea of the content of a paragraph and help them find the precise meaning of the phrases of the passage.

15. Aren't you just relapsing to the "please translate" routine?

No. At first, any translating that is done should be done by the teacher. The students should be kept at work on the FL text in the FL. You have them read a phrase, after you, first in a group and then individually, *trying to understand its meaning*. Then you put the phrase in the form of a question and the students read the answer from the book.

In the case of an idiomatic sentence that can't be readily understood from the context, you say what it means in English and have the students say it in the FL—read it, that is. This helps the student concentrate on the meaning of the FL phrase in the FL. You use variation practice just as you do in teaching hearing and speaking. For example, let us assume that the students do not understand the phrase:

You can ask:	Il est en train de ranger ses affaires. Qu'est-ce qu'il est en train de faire?
Students:	Il est en train de ranger ses affaires.
You:	Est-ce qu'il est en train de faire des courses?
Students:	Non, il est en train de ranger ses affaires.
You:	Est-il en train de dîner?
Students:	Non, il est en train de ranger ses affairs.
You:	Dites en francais: He is busy putting away his things.
Students:	Il est en train de ranger ses affaires.
You:	He is busy doing errands.
Students:	Il est en train de faire des courses.
You:	He is having dinner.
Students:	Il est en train de dîner.

After they learn to hear and answer very simple questions, they can be asked questions that call for more than a mere reiteration of the text; and soon they can be given more difficult questions that they will use in preparing their reading assignments.

16. Wouldn't it be better to give students an all-French vocabulary so they would be learning French synonyms for each word?

This is an excellent idea for more advanced students who have already learned to read in the FL. But you learn to read by reading—not by thumbing a vocabulary and puzzling over definitions in the FL or even in English. We must avoid any tendency to word-calling, word-hunting, or even word-study as such, until the students establish the habit of trying to understand the meaning of entire phrases; for if students once get the idea that they must know what each word means individually before trying to understand what a phrase means, their progress in reading will be snail-like and their attitude will be laborious, pedantic, bored, and anti-intellectual. Later on, intelligently conceived word-study can be very valuable; but we must never lapse into the literal-mindedness of our nineteenth-century predecessors. Even translation exercises should be intellectually challenging!

17. You don't mean that you advocate translation, surely!

Yes, occasionally. But I repeat (for the nth time) that at all levels the class time should be devoted primarily to hearing, speaking, reading, and writing in the FL!

18. Do you propose to give practice in the four skills even when you teach literary works?

Certainly. If students are reading a literary work in the second or third year, the instructor can devise questions in the FL which will prompt significant discussion of the text. At first he may have to explain the meaning of the questions and even provide the answers. The next step is to give the students more complicated questions (mimeographed) for use in preparing their reading assignments. Eventually, the students can be asked to prepare questions themselves and be prepared to answer them correctly. Résumés, restatements, and explications in the FL are also very useful—although they are much more difficult than simple questions and answers. But at best it is hard work to keep a class at work in the FL for an entire class hour; and we can not assume that if we merely refrain from using the mother tongue, the students will eventually understand and use the FL perfectly. *Hearing and understanding* is an invaluable exercise; but *hearing and not understanding* gives the students the habit of . . . not understanding. Most students learn only what they are taught to do!

19. But literature should surely by studied for its own sake instead of being the point of departure for practice in the four skills.

Certainly. Literature courses at all levels *should* be paralleled by courses in speaking and writing; in this way they could be conducted entirely in the FL. But as this is not the case in all colleges, students in advanced courses often develop a sort of bastard language that is a frightful mixture of the mother tongue and the FL. (Who has not heard advanced students take English words, pronounce them as if they were in the FL, and put them together in English word order?) It is especially in advanced courses in literature, whose students have not had extensive training in practice courses in the FL, that translation exercises become necessary. This exercise helps students to understand a text in detail and it brings to their attention new expressions that they can add to their active stock of phrases. Most of all, it teaches them not to be satisfied with shoddy comments in a language that is neither the mother tongue nor the FL.

When a translation exercise *is* assigned, the entire class should participate, each student rendering a single sentence with the utmost care to express its precise meaning. All mistakes must be corrected down to the last detail, the students being the ones to do the correcting whenever they can. A phony translation is no better than a shoddy comment in phony French (or whatever).

A first-class FL department should provide serious training in speaking and writing at every level. However, in the case of inadequately trained students, it is obviously impossible for them to carry on in the FL in advanced courses in literature. Therefore, for the time being, many students will have to continue using English in class discussion and examinations. However, if the lectures, readings, and reports in all literature courses were in the FL, it would hasten the day when students would acquire more adequate skill in speaking and writing.

We are just beginning to learn to use recorded material for teaching literature. Serious and systematic efforts should be made to devise and refine recorded material for teaching FLs at all levels. Every publisher is rushing to the market with recorded material for beginners, but it is even more important to prepare such material for teaching students in their second, third, fourth, and postgraduate years: *they* are the forgotten men.

20. When do students learn to write in the FL?

They should be given systematic training in writing almost from the beginning of the first year. After two or three weeks, they should learn how to write correctly the phrases of the first dialog. First they copy the text correctly and then they write it as a *dictée*. Any mistake, however insignificant, must be corrected at once, for students do not learn to spell correctly by writing incorrectly.

After four or five weeks, they should begin to write the answer to questions asked orally and to frame questions for themselves. The next phase is to rewrite sentences, substituting one person for another, etc. After eight or ten weeks, they can write little themes on subject matter that is familiar to them. At all times, and at all levels, they should be encouraged to use phrases they have learned in their books and not to concoct phony phrases. Each year the students should be given training in all four skills. If they do not get such training year after year, it is simply silly to suppose they will be notably better FL teachers than their predecessors. Beginning right is fine; but it is . . . only the beginning. The "oral-aural approach" is all very well; but what we really need to work on is "follow through in the four skills."

THE BASIC COURSE IN MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

BY A. BRUCE GAARDER, *U.S. Office of Education*

This paper will examine the concept "basic course" applied in the teaching of modern foreign languages at the college level, and attempt to establish a) the widely-varying, arbitrary, unrealistic character of the traditional concept; b) the procrustean results of its application in schools and colleges; c) some bases for a revision of the traditional concept; and d) some technical and practical procedures for improving its application to instruction.

The first point to be made is that two factors are indivisibly involved in any consideration of a "course" or other unit of instruction, whatever its special designation: the *ground traversed* (i.e., the course content) and the *allotment of student and teacher time* for traversing that ground. It is true that these factors are unavoidably given some consideration in every teaching situation, but two common incongruities combine to distort any unified concept of the basic course and weaken its

application to learning. The first of these, and perhaps the less important, relates to the course content: What should be the extent of the ground traversed in the basic course? All would probably agree to "cover completely" at least a standard variant of the sound system. The more troublesome form and order systems give rise to some disagreement, for lack of frequency counts and because of the inevitable arbitrariness of the cut-off point which must be fixed to exclude at the one end undesirable spoken forms and at the other, undesirable written ones. Even so, it is neither form nor order but vocabulary which accounts for the widest divergence in definition and delimitation of the content of the basic course.

The arbitrariness of the choice of course content is not a minor ill, but it is at least a relative one. When the student moves on to other material, changes schools or is subjected to examinations based on different content the ill quickly becomes apparent. Within the limits of the course itself there is consistency and at best no harm need result.

It is harder to find anything good to say about the other incongruity, the fact that the allotment of student and teacher time is completely inconsistent with the learning required and claimed for the basic course. Here the unrealistic character of the traditional concept is revealed in two ways:

1) By the common insistence upon the academic year as the time period within which the basic course is to be taught and learned, *irrespective of whether the class meets 3, 4, 5 (or even 6 to 10) times per week.*
2) By the common failure to accept what seems unequivocally to be the reality in this matter of contact time allotment: one academic year, even with nine classroom hours per week, is not enough time for functional mastery[1] of the basic course.

A thorough study of college course descriptions might reveal trends of significance for this presentation. Certainly it is to be hoped that the allotment of contact hours for the beginner's course is being increased here and there. For the purpose of this paper it seems sufficient to list representative institutions to show that by and large we still follow the traditional pattern which sets the academic year as the unit of time.

[1] A loaded expression which will be examined more carefully later.

TABLE 1

Typical institutions presenting the "basic course" in one academic year		Number of class hours per week			
		3	4	5	6 or more
Brooklyn College	G, R, S			x	
U of Alabama	F, G	x			
Wesleyan U (Conn.)	F G			x x	1 hr. lab.
U of Penn.	G, R			x	
Columbia U	R			x	
Athens College (Ala.)	F, G			x	
Birmingham-Southern	G			x	
Catholic U (D.C.)	F, G	x			
Harvard U	F, S		x		
Princeton U	S				6 plus lab.
Fordham (N.Y.)	G	x			
College of the City of N.Y.	G, R, S			x	
New Mexico Western College	F, S	x			
Rutgers College	G			x	

The catalog-course description provides in each case the evidence for asserting that these institutions do in fact consider that the first academic year of study (or in a few cases the alternative of double attendance during one semester) covers in a reasonably complete way the phonology, morphology, syntax, and a limited vocabulary of the new language. The criteria are that on the one hand the first year's work be described in such terms as "the essentials of pronunciation and grammar," "fundamentals of the language," "fundamentals of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, dictation, conversation," "essentials of spoken and written language," "basic vocabulary, pronunciation, essential grammar and sentence structure," etc., and that on the other hand the next year's course be described as a review of the basic one plus the "reading of short stories," "modern literature," "study of representative narrative and dramatic works," "reading modern texts," "development of ability to read at sight," etc.

It is to be noted that a *few* second-year course descriptions say that the work "completes" or is a "continuation" of the first year, but it is altogether doubtful whether this can be interpreted to mean that the students continue their unfinished efforts to master the original set of basic course materials.

Mention of the "set of basic course materials" introduces the special problems which cluster about the textbook, the hard-bound, two-pound book. Teachers and student alike are caught and either stretched or maimed to fit the iron bed: the inexorable 180 days[2] of the school year and the compulsion to go from cover to cover of the book. One would be hard put to establish any relationship between those 180 days and the nature of language or language learning. A correspondence of the three variables, the 180 days, the distance from cover to cover, and the mentality of each student who enrolls, is impossible.

Let us suppose, for a moment, that agreement has been reached as to the content of the basic course. (We assume it will include as a minimum a standard variant system of phonology, all of the morphology commonly used in speech, enough patterns of syntax for active participation in the most common speech situations and a vocabulary suitable to the socio-intellectual interests of the student, 1500 to 2500 items. In other words, excluding considerations of sequence and methodology,

[2] Usually reduced by holidays, convocations, fish-fries, etc., to a figure closer to 170 usable class days.

the content of the courses noted above in Table 1.) Let us imagine someone's average college class taught by the best teacher in the department and, in keeping with the times, aided by the best electro-mechanical equipment available. How long will it take any one or all of them to achieve functional mastery of the material of that basic course? Admittedly "average class," "best teacher" and "best equipment" encompass many unknowns, but if we can agree upon functional mastery as being something like the ability to *perform* in the foreign language to the extent of reading or hearing discussed anything in the FL corpus included in the course, taking appropriate notes and thereafter pressing one's points effectively in a two-way discussion of significant items—if that is functional mastery no one quite knows the answer to the question.

No one quite knows how many hours of contact with the language would be required for the functional mastery of one of those hard-bound books, but there is some evidence that bears heavily on the answer.

At the Foreign Service Institute, the Army Language School, the Navy Language School, and the Air Force Russian Language Program, combined experience totalling over fifty years[3] has established the following table of expectancy for the sort of functional mastery we are talking about:

TABLE 2

Language	Scheduled Contact Hours*			
	FSI[1]	ALS	NLS[2]	AFRS
French	600	690	570	
German	600	690	1080	
Italian	600	690		
Russian	1100	1362	1080	approx. 1086
Spanish	600	690	570	

* Plus home study varying from 15 to 24 hours weekly.
[1] 6 or fewer students per class.
[2] 8 or fewer students per class.

In order to provide as many class contact hours as ALS (6 hours drill per day with native informants in classes of fewer than 8 students, plus outside study) a five-hour per week college course in French, German, or Spanish would extend over seven semesters plus twelve weeks. For Russian the ALS class-contact time represents something like 15 semesters and 2 additional weeks of college time at 5 hours per week, plus outside study. All of this if there were no holidays.

[3] ALS and NLS established in 1941; AFRS in 1946; FSI in 1947.

The attempt made here to compare different kinds of courses in terms of "functional mastery" leaves many unknowns out of account. The most important of these is that we simply do not know how many reinforcements—how many meaningful experiences with a given structure—are necessary before the learner, of any age, can reasonably expect to have "internalized" the structure to the point that he can perform with it fluently whenever he needs it. We do know that the traditional second-year course, built somehow on the assumption that the basic one has been run, is chaotic. We do not know exactly what degree of mastery of a given item of lexicon or structure should be acquired before the student moves on to the next item (supposing, of course, that all items will appear again and again as reentries) but we are sure that good teachers everywhere share the frustration of their students who are required to take the next "lesson" without having control of the preceding one just in order to "finish the book." Finally, we know that the normal heterogeneity of any college class is aggravated by the increasing disparity of the background in foreign language with which the students enroll: too much to be beginners yet not enough to warrant entering the second year course, the "review"; and this heterogeneity in turn aggravates the frustration of their too-hurried, lock-step flight over the basic course.

We take exception to the traditional concept and organization of the basic course on two grounds:

1) It is impossible to achieve functional mastery[4] of the course content in the contact time allotted to the student.
2) The lock-step organization of the course (forcing all students to proceed together and at the same rate) compounds unnecessarily the problems arising from the heterogeneity of the student groups who present themselves for instruction:
   a) denying the need of each student to start from the point he has already reached and advance thereafter at his own optimum rate;
   b) making it impossible to apply the principle that learning is most efficient and effective when each step is mastered before the next is undertaken;
   c) making inadequate or no provision or demand for frequent, regular display and exercise by the student of his increasing proficiency in situations approximating natural use of the language in the target culture.

[4] Let it be borne in mind that this functional mastery a) is what the student wants and expects; b) is what the teacher and the course description claim—at least by strong implication—to give; c) is basic to literary studies through the foreign language medium; and d) is what is now demanded for the conduct of international affairs and business.

Placement tests, regrouping of students, make-up sections, honors sections, etc., are attempts to cope with the problem of widely-varying individual differences in rates of learning and previously-acquired knowledge of the foreign language. There are other ways to improve the the situation.

1. Publication of course materials in unit fascicles: Instead of presenting the basic course in a hard-bound book, its material can be issued in unit fascicles, each fascicle punched for insertion in a notebook type binder. This not only facilitates the students' purchasing and being required to "cover" only that portion of the course that they can master, but it permits implementation of the time-lag principle: withholding visual access to the material until the student has acquired oral and auditory control over it. Publication of the learning materials in separate unit fascicles would at least relieve some of the pressure to "finish the book" in a year regardless of whether the class meets three, four or five times per week.

2. Complete restructuring of the course: The favored situations described above which allot 690 contact hours to the basic course use native speaker instructors in a ratio of about 1 to 6 or 8 students and require all of the students' time. Neither of these features is practicable at the college level. There is a way, however, of reorganizing foreign language learning at the college level which a) is completely compatible with the student's need to pursue other studies simultaneously; b) will not increase the number of instructors needed to do the work; c) provides for any spread of individual differences; d) allows each student to proceed at his own rate; e) calls for the highest level of intensely personalized teacher-student activity; f) gives each student an hour a week to display his developing proficiency in a close-to-natural situation, and g) provides the same 690 contact hours in three semesters of study.

This miracle course, as yet untried anywhere, would be organized as follows:

Time Allotment

1. A five hours credit, five hour per week plan, assuming *and using* as contact time two hours

study for each of the five hours class time. Total, 15 contact hours per week, or 810 contact hours spread over three 18-week semesters.

2. The 15 hours per week divided as follows, at least after the first week: a) 13 hours of completely individualized study and drill with electro-mechanical language learning equipment; b) 1 hour per week of explication in English to facilitate analysis by the student (this in large groups of a hundred or more students), c) 2 half-hour quasi-private sessions with the instructor meeting with either two or three students at a time.

Materials and Equipment

A set of basic materials designed for presentation through an electro-mechanical device. This requires attention to several points: a) incorporation of the principles of step increment learning, i.e., programming for self-instruction; b) design of the total package, recorded and printed, so as to make optimum use of ear and eye in learning; c) presentation of the results of the recordings in such a way as to give each student direct, immediate access to any part of the course and complete control over the recording he is using for the 13 hours that he has available for practice. (The basic item of equipment is a simple, single-track tape playback—*not necessarily a tape recorder*—either fed from a central control or using pre-recorded tapes. The playback should either be easily portable or supplemented for home study by disks, telephone line, or FM radio.)

Methods

1. The method is designed on the hypothesis that foreign language teaching-learning is closely parallel to the teaching-learning of applied music, i.e., the student *practices* alone but sees his teacher frequently, regularly, to demonstrate what he has learned and to receive guidance.[5]

2. The instructor, meeting with two or three students, will use a system of techniques to elicit speech from them covering and re-combining all of the current and previous material, will correct errors immediately but unobtrusively, and will make note of topics which should be treated during the weekly analytical session.

3. Except for the coverage of writing and reading by regular written tests and examinations, the two weekly half-hour sessions provide constant and sufficient evaluation of student progress.

4. As each student advances, at his own optimum rate, he will be scheduled to meet with the instructor together with one or two other students who have reached a similar point in the course.

Credits and Requirements

Foreign language requirements covering the four skills (the basic course) would be stated in terms of proficiency rather than in terms of credit hours. Each student would apply for final examination—credit examination—whenever he had completed the course or considered himself prepared. Evaluation would be by standardized four-skill examinations.

APPENDIX

The following quotations from a standard, modern treatise[6] on piano teaching may suffice to show the extraordinarily close analogy between teaching applied music and teaching foreign languages.

The role of imitation

Imitation is the basis of early instruction. . . . The desired movements [sounds, patterns] must be shown and imitated again and again until correct habits are formed. . . . Some parents . . . are fearful lest their children should learn to play [speak] "by ear" and not "by note" [with a consciousness of the grammar involved]. They should be informed as to the radical changes in all forms of elementary instruction during the last decade. They should be made acquainted with the importance attached to *imitation* in the present-day teaching of all subjets. . . .

Precedence of speech over reading

Throughout the course the ear is the leading factor. . . . The principle of "the thing before the sign" is consistently maintained—playing [speaking] precedes notation [reading]. Active participation is the first step. Mere listening to music [language] . . . is not enough. The child must *make* music [speak the language].

Sight reading [reading without translation] is the result of combined memory and habit. Memory is the art of recalling to consciousness the slumbering impression of a previous experience. It is really pretty much the same thing as habit. No composition is fully memorized [no pattern or structure is fully mastered] until the pupil can actually hear it in imagination. [Stated in terms of foreign language teaching, this means that the student should not be expected to read anything the structural patterns and vocabulary of which he has not already mastered with ear and tongue.]

Confusion of language with its graphic symbol system

One of the most serious problems in elementary piano [language] teaching has been the confusion in the minds of teachers between giving instruction in the beginnings of piano playing [the language itself] and in the elements of notation [its graphic symbol system]. Tobias Matthay has stated the situation clearly in the pamphlet, "On Method in Teaching," where he says, "Most of the mischief has been done because the teacher does not distinguish between the first steps of *learning to play the instrument* [use the language itself] and *learning to read* notation [decipher the graphic symbol system]. . . . This confusion has arisen from causes readily understood. First of all, the most practical means for learning music [a foreign language][7] has been the printed page. The teacher's directions could best be kept in mind by reference to the notation involved [printed page]. Each progressive step in piano [language] training could easily be reduced to the formula of notation [writing]. The pupil, on the other hand, has gone to his . . . lessons filled with the desire to *play* [speak]. . . . What a grievous disappointment, then, to find that lesson after lesson resolves itself into the study of innumerable signs and symbols."

It must be realized that few pianists [language teachers] of the past were students of psychology, and that . . . the study of the operations of the child mind is really a matter of very recent research. Therefore it is not strange that the confusion between the "thing" [language] and its "sign" [writing] should have beclouded . . . pedagogy.

The arbitrary connection between language and writing

There is no natural connection between music notation [the graphic symbol system] and the sounds represented. The association is purely arbitrary, and has meaning to the initiated only. . . . Let it be understood at once that the ability to read music notation [read the language] is fundamental. . . . The point now being raised is that this is not the same subject as piano playing [language itself], and pedagogically the two processes must be clear to the teacher. . . . Reading, in reality, is a *process of recall*. . . .[8]

The futility of explanations

Neither must the teacher expect results from explaining and describing technical matters to his pupils. The desired movements [patterns] must be shown and imitated again and again until correct habits are formed. . . . Explanations and definitions come later, after action habits are established. Rules and definitions must follow and come from the pupil's experience, otherwise they will have no meaning for him. . . . Merely explaining a situation or process will not assure correct performance by the pupil, even though he be intelligent and sincere. It is necessary to see to it that he performs the correct activity again and again just as it should be done, until you are sure not only of his understanding but also of his accurate actions.

Language is habit, not knowledge

A child during his early piano [language] lessons must concentrate on every little motion [detail] and

[5] See appendix following for this parallel.

[6] All quotations from Schelling, Haake, Haake, and McConathy, *Oxford Piano Course, First Teacher's Manual*, 2nd enlarged ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1932). Bracketed notes and emphasis mine.

[7] Since the development of the tape recorder the most practical means of group learning of an FL is in the FL Laboratory.

[8] Compare this with the statement of policy of the Steering Committee of the FL Program, MLA (*FL Bulletin* No. 48, May 1956; "The elementary language course at all levels, from elementary school through college, should concentrate at the beginning upon the learner's *hearing* and *speaking* the foreign tongue."

often with even the most intense effort he finds it difficult. . . . A skilled pianist [linguist] on the other hand, may direct his thought to the interpretation . . . while the fingers [tongue] trip merrily along of their own accord. Without delving deeper into this subject we may say that there are lower nerve centers which are able to take care of such actions without calling upon the thinking part of the brain except in emergencies. A teacher who realizes the many repeated experiences necessary to set up such automatic reactions will be patient with his slower pupils. There is no question but that the results of the piano lesson [FL teaching], whether given individually or in class, are largely dependent upon the practice done by the pupil between lessons.

Preparation and role of the teacher

The success of all piano [FL] teaching, whether private or in classes, depends largely upon the skill and preparation of the teacher. . . . Expertness in class management cannot take the place of a thorough knowledge of the subject to be taught. The . . . teacher must know the fundamentals of piano playing [must speak the language]. But this ability . . . by no means carries with it a knowledge of elementary . . . pedagogy. That subject is a specialized branch of study.

The class, methods, etc.

Class work should be scheduled for at least one hour per week, either in one period of an hour, or, preferably, in two periods of one half hour each. . . . The . . . teacher is concerned with keeping the whole class actively and purposefully employed the whole time. The class hour should not be a succession of brief individual lessons. The modern . . . teacher no longer follows the old formula of mechanical exercises [sentences to translate] as the basis of technical growth. Interesting music itself [authentic FL selections] is the material through which technique is developed. . . . The technical elements [new structures] of every piece are assembled in the form of Marginal Notes. Both pupil and teacher may see at a glance the exact element which the selection presents, and . . . the course proceeds to a series of thoroughly organised studies. At first these are not assigned . . . for individual practice, but are given as unison class drills. Beginning with little "questions and answers" the pupil is taught . . . to organize them into little compositions. The process is quite similar to that of a course in language or English composition. . . .

Speaking in all tenses from the beginning

School singing books [language teachers] have long ago discarded the plan of beginning with the Key of C [the present tense]. Modern piano [language] teachers have also discovered that the pupil can learn to play in one key [speak in one tense] as readily as in another.

The materials

The material, first of all, is musical [interesting and authentic]; it is carefully selected from the very best sources . . . no instruction can function that does not first see to it that the pupil has something to say before concerning itself with the way in which it shall be said. Every technical [pattern] drill should grow out of an immediate . . . experience and should be applied at once to further new and interesting musical [language] material.

benefit he has gained from previous FL study.

How to attract and hold the interest of these better-prepared FL students when they enter college? Two possible methods come to mind almost at once: 1) design and cause the widespread adoption of a program of college FL courses largely new in their aims and methods: or, 2) work within the framework of the present courses to better integrate them and to broaden the scope of their objectives, as well as to cause a wider and more effective use of the audio-lingual method. The first solution is the more radical, to be sure, and perhaps the braver one, too, but it is certainly the more difficult. It would run into many obstacles: opposition from faculty members opposed to and/or not competent in the audio-lingual approach; problems in persuading the liberal arts faculties to vote favorably on a new FL program; delays in putting the program into effect due to academic and administrative red tape; lack of a tried methodology for instruction in the new program; lack of textbooks and audio-visual materials suited to the new program, etc.

The second, less radical solution of revamping present FL courses, is a more conservative one, admittedly, but it has the merit of probably being much easier to put into effect and creating much less opposition. In any case, wherever either of these solutions is tried successfully there can be no doubt that a notable improvement in FL teaching will follow.

To design a better program for the type of FL student we have in mind is an inspiring task, and one worthy of the best thought of the profession. But it is beyond the scope of the present paper to make more than general suggestions for such a program, since a detailed consideration of such a curriculum would be the task of the whole group attending the conference on problems in FL teaching in college. The most I can do here is to sketch broadly and tentatively the general outline of a better college FL program which seeks to obviate some of the inherent problems of the first method proposed above and yet is bolder in its approach than the second method.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A NEW FL PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE FRESHMEN WITH 4-10 YEARS OF LANGUAGE STUDY

By Robert G. Mead, Jr., *University of Connecticut*

INTRODUCTION

This title implies that FL teachers on the college level should begin to think in terms of an improved program, one suited to the needs of what will be a constantly growing number of entering freshmen with 4 to 10 years of study of an FL. In other words, a program capable of challenging a group of students whose language attainments range from good to excellent. We may also assume that many if not most of these freshmen will have had considerable audio-lingual training. What is called for, then, seems to be an FL program which would depart in a number of ways from the present more or less traditional college language curriculum. This traditional approach is a compartmentalized one in that the courses are usually units in themselves rather than integral parts of an organized whole. Furthermore, in the traditional curriculum audio-lingual stress is frequently slighted, and the class in language or literature is conducted mostly in English. Composition is often limited to translation of set English models rather than free prose composition directly in the FL.

Is is my contention that if college FL departments continue to conduct most of their courses in the above manner we will fail to stimulate and hold the interest of the increasing numbers of freshmen who come to us with an audio-lingual background and orientation. And if we do not attract and keep many of these better-prepared students, whether they specialize in the FL or merely take some courses, then I believe that the whole FL movement in the U.S. will, for the most part, fail at its highest level. In view of our position in the world today, I do not believe we can afford such a failure. Nor do I think it is desirable for the college student himself to lose much of the

SUGGESTIONS FOR A NEW PROGRAM

Language training in college, based upon developing higher levels of achievement in the four basic, component skills of hearing, speaking, reading, and writing, should always be flexible enough in its programming to reflect the newer ideas being developed by such groups as the MLA FL Program Research Center and the various AAT's, as

well as by individual leaders in our profession. This means that FL instructors on the college level, much more than they are today, must be aware of and receptive to new ideas in the field, especially those which give promise of value and practical utility.

FL teaching in college centers around three general areas, which may be ideally described as follows: literature (courses which deal with the reading and interpretation of works which communicate the culture and civilization of the foreign country, with the latter terms being used in a broad sense); composition, both oral and written (training in speaking and writing the language with a maximum opportunity for free expression of significant ideas on the part of the student); and linguistics (a study of the structure and sounds of the language and of their historical development). Our task, then, is to design an improved program in these three areas, a program suited to the needs and abilities of large numbers of students who will come to us with a linguistic competence considerably better than that of those trained by conventional means.

A. General: 1. A "major" in a foreign language must be thought of as a program extending over four years and totaling some 32 to 36 semester hours instead of the usual two-year sequence with some 24 semester hours of course work.

2. The program of the student majoring in an FL should be worked out with care so that, in institutions where it is possible, the student can also take "related" courses in the history, geography, and politics of the nation(s) whose language he is studying. Consultation between his FL major advisor and the instructor of these related courses should result in making it possible for the student to do a good deal of his work in the above areas in the FL.

In line with the above suggestions, instructors of the various courses within the FL program should also consult frequently with their colleagues as to the method and content of one anothers' courses so as to assure maximum integration and continuity among the courses as well as to prevent unnecessary duplication and/or omission of necessary material. In other words, liaison among the FL instructors should be greatly improved over the level which now prevails. The need for this is especially great in the case of instructors in literature. And increased visiting from class to class by instructors would also contribute to this end.

3. An entering freshman with 4-10 years of language study, in order not to break the continuity of his FL work, should be permitted to take at least one advanced (or "major") course in the FL in each of his first four semesters and, perhaps, occasionally even two such courses, depending upon his ability and desire. Exceptionally able seniors might also be allowed to enroll in graduate seminars.

4. There should be no 50-60 minute lectures during which, at best, the students sit passively, taking notes and, at worst, doze blissfully as the instructor's voice drones on. A short, lively exposition of certain key points, delivered in the FL, is much preferable, especially when the exposition is followed by a discussion, also in the FL, of interesting material recently covered in the course (and in collateral reading) and presumably familiar to the student. Where necessary, certain students could be primed to provide an initial impetus to the discussion with properly timed and penetrating observations and questions.

5. It would be advantageous, perhaps, for some classes to meet four times a week instead of the usual three, while in other cases there might be only two class meetings. One way of accomplishing this change in time pattern might be to decrease the number of courses (especially in literature), which sometimes tend to proliferate excessively, and to integrate more clearly those which are retained so as to increase the articulation and continuity of the whole FL program. Periodic examination of the curriculum and its possible revision are especially desirable.

6. Examinations should be wholly in the FL and should be designed so as to allow the student to express himself at some length in the FL, in the form of essay answers, as well as to answer questions of an objective type.

7. The usual type of FL text, which to a considerable extent now shapes the pattern in which courses are taught, should be replaced by a wide range of books without vocabularies and other translation aids (texts printed in the foreign country itself are especially advantageous); wider reading in scholarly journals and books, in newsmagazines in the FL, and in the supplements of the Sunday editions of foreign newspapers is necessary; and last, but certainly not least, there need to be worked out imaginative and effective ways of incorporating maps, audio-visual aids, other realia, and the language lab, into courses in all three areas (literature, composition, and linguistics).

8. Class size in FL instruction has always been important, and it is especially significant in a program such as the one we propose. No FL class should be allowed to reach a size which experience shows to be too large for effective work. At such a point sectioning should be resorted to, and the absolute necessity of such a remedy should be made very clear to the administrator (dean or registrar) concerned with such matters. This is not always easy, as many of us already know to our sorrow, but the FL teacher should be firm and persistent.

B. Literature: The ultra-narrow traditionalist concept of literature as an isolated discipline best cultivated in an ivory tower must be abandoned. I realize, of course, that this concept is not held in all our colleges and universities, but I suspect that for one reason or another something approaching it still survives in too many of them. In any event, it must give way to a much broader understanding of the term. Ronald Hilton, director of Hispanic American Studies at Stanford University, described tellingly what can happen to some college FL teachers in his address to the Seventh National Conference of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO (Denver, 29 Sept.-2 Oct. 1959):

> Because of America's new role in international affairs, there is a wave of official interest in language study. Language teachers have developed a chamber of commerce mentality in trying to sell their subject, and they frequently assert that the study of languages is a necessary concomitant of the growing interest in world affairs. However, I must confess that I seldom see language teachers poring over the New York *Times* and *Foreign Affairs*, and attempts to initiate with them discussions of current developments are sometimes met with the statement, "I'm not interested in politics" (the last word receiving a peculiarly deprecatory intonation), a statement which is usually a veiled confession of ignorance. One language teacher, a friend of mine and a very able scholar, has traveled in Latin America on several occasions, yet seems blind and insensitive to the drama of epic proportions which is taking place before his eyes; he carries on research on "Windmills in Portuguese Extramadura." This is singularly close to counting the number of angels who could stand on a pinhead while the Turks, beating at the gates of Constantinople, are destroying the old order and opening a new era.

This new approach to the teaching of literature which I propose would be similar to that used in the Culture and Civilization courses of the more successful of our NDEA Summer Language Institutes. This means that the study of literature should embrace many viewpoints: that of the cultural anthropologist, for instance, who is interested in the physical characteristics of the people, their family customs, social organizations, government, religion, organization of work and division of labor, the role of the sexes and the division of power, etc., in addition to the more customary elements of political, intellectual, and literary history, sociology, geography, economics, and biography. Obviously, it will be impossible for the students to achieve more than a rudimentary knowledge in many of these fields but, even so, they will gain a

much broader and better integrated understanding than most of them now attain of the culture and civilization of the area whose language they are studying.

The precise number of courses in literature in the curriculum, their nature (survey courses following a chronological sequence, genre courses, topical or thematic courses, etc.), and similar matters are the concern of the faculty of a given language department and, therefore, are beyond the scope of this conference.

On the undergraduate level, however, courses in literature should not become too narrow or overspecialized. Specialization is best left for work on the graduate level. The undergraduate major should include a properly integrated sequence of courses in literature, probably totaling between 21 and 24 semester hours, in which the approach is broad rather than overly-detailed, and in which the emphasis is on a two-way discussion (in the FL) of the ideas embodied in the course rather than on the memorization of hundreds of facts (names, dates, titles, etc.), although the need for the acquisition of a certain amount of factual material is obvious and readily admitted.

C. Composition: A "new key" approach is also called for in the case of composition courses on the undergraduate level. Although the number of composition courses as such in a typical FL major program might not be more than two or three (for the better prepared students at most two "intermediate" courses and one "advanced" course in composition), the remaining courses in the FL program should also furnish the student with ample opportunity to express himself in writing on themes having to do with literature, culture, and, conceivably, even linguistics. In other words, composition in the FL should form part of the work of every college language course.

As to the composition courses themselves, we believe strongly (as in the case of literature) that they should be conducted entirely in the FL, not in English. The student must be challenged to work at the top of his ability, both intellectual and linguistic. He should be immersed in as stimulating an intellectual environment as possible, and this immersion should be accomplished in the FL. Give him a great deal to think about, and give it to him in the FL. His intellectual horizon must be widened and his mind stimulated to function in the FL in relation to topics of sufficiently vital interest to bring forth the sustained effort required to produce a composition which is acceptable in both its idiom and its ideas. These goals are not easily achieved by the traditional composition text, containing excerpts which are read and discussed, and the student then required to write a "composition" which is usually a paraphrase of the original. Whatever originality of style and thought the student may have is often frustrated in its expression by a practice which, in effect, forces him to compose in a mold and in which the topics selected by the editor of the text are not invariably of great interest to the individual student or the class.

It is a better method in every way, it seems to me, to forego the use of a composition text of this type or to use one sparingly and as an adjunct to other materials. Instead, frequent, fairly short free compositions on topics in which the student is particularly interested and about which the instructor may make some helpful suggestions are much to be preferred. Such compositions are popular, productive of more original thought, and written in a natural, spontaneous FL which, when corrected, is retained more effectively by the student than that which he attempts to memorize as he paraphrases (or translates) model texts. Free compositions of this type could be varied from time to time by some on assigned subjects (including occasional simple research papers) or, perhaps, a situation capable of being developed into a short story or character sketch may be suggested. Poetry in the FL might even be attempted.

Assuming, as we do, that the student has mastered the most common idioms of the FL, it is up to the instructor in composition to expose the student to a wide variety of idiomatic usage in newspapers and journals of various types and in different fields, and to assign other reading which will be of vital and continuing interest to the student.

To sum up, then: the student's composition should be as "free" as possible, and develop naturally out of his interests (including non-literary ones), with the instructor serving as a helpful counselor rather than a narrow-minded and unimaginative grammatical taskmaster. Ample opportunity, it goes without saying, should also be given for the student to use the language himself in class—a sort of "oral composition," as it were.

D. Linguistics: The study of a language, from the point of view of philology and linguistics, is usually considered to be more appropriate on the graduate level than on the undergraduate. I am no expert in either field, but for the type of student we are concerned with—one with a much better-than-average preparation—it is quite conceivable that at least one introductory course devoted to the above fields might be included in an undergraduate FL major. The exact nature of such a course, at what point it should be taken, whether it should last a semester or a year, and how the approaches of the philologist and descriptive linguist can be harmoniously combined in it—all these matters I leave to persons far better qualified than I.

A PROGRAM FOR THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE MAJOR

BY THEODORE ANDERSSON, *University of Texas*

INTRODUCTION

By "FL major" we usually mean that junior or senior in college who is concentrating approximately fifty per cent of his time and attention on courses in one or more foreign languages. There is of course a great range of interest and ability among FL majors. Some will become the future scholars and teachers, others will become specialists in such fields as foreign service, journalism, or international trade. Without necessarily relating their major to a future vocation some will be concentrating on their favorite field while others will be selecting a language as the least of several evils. It behooves us to remember also that as university life is now organized a student's major interest may not involve an academic subject at all; his real major may consist in working on the school paper, taking an active part in undergraduate politics, or emphasizing social life in a fraternity. Under these circumstances the academic work done by a major is often a compromise between what ideally it should be and what in present circumstances it can be.

In order to sharpen our definition of the FL major it will be necessary for us to ask in the first place what he should know and what he should be able to do. A shift of emphasis from credit hours or specific courses to the concept of proficiency seems essential. After defining the expected achievement of a major and developing tests to measure proficiency as objectively as possible, we should then consider the kind of program most likely to assure this kind of proficiency. Since the study of language, literature, and culture is cumulative, the major program in college cannot be entirely separated from the pre-major college program nor from the preparatory work done in school. A few remarks on early language learning, FL instruction in school, and the continuation of FL instruction in college are therefore in order.

We shall want to conclude with the question how best to achieve reasonable uniformity from college to college and a reasonably high and ever-improving standard. What can the MLA do to help establish and maintain a high national standard in FL major programs?

WHAT THE FL MAJOR SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO

Tentatively, the college graduate who has majored in an FL should possess to a reasonable degree certain skills, knowledge, understanding, and the beginnings of certain kinds of experience.

The skills are those defined in the first four sections of the MLA Statement of Qualifications for Secondary School Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. A proficiency on the level of "good" would seem to be reasonable in the areas of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. The use of the proficiency tests which are now being developed is desirable to measure such skills objectively and on a national basis.

The basic knowledge to be expected of an FL major is suggested in sections five and six of the MLA Qualifications Statement. This knowledge includes a thorough working knowledge of the usage and structure of the language concerned, and a knowledge on the "good" level of the foreign culture with emphasis on literature. Again, the MLA proficiency tests can be used.

Knowledge and understanding are not readily separated. However, under the heading of understanding may be considered such subjects as the values of foreign language study (cf. the MLA statement on this subject), the nature of language, the process of language learning, the behavior patterns, and way of life of a foreign people as compared with the U.S. way of life, an historical perspective, and a relation of specialized language skills and knowledge to life in our times.

Since the acquisition of skills and understanding can be acquired only in part from books, it is highly desirable that ways be explored to provide the FL major with opportunities for direct personal experience in a foreign country.

PROGRAM OF THE FL MAJOR

The effectiveness of a major program depends partly on the experience and instruction that a student has had before entering college. It is therefore a matter of self-interest for college language departments to encourage in every feasible way the acquiring of language experience by children, the establishment of long and effective sequences of language instruction in school, the proper order and emphasis in the learning of languages on all levels. At the present time a college language department cannot *count* on any effective language preparation in school. Soon however, with the introduction or increase of FL entrance requirements, it should be possible to count on a minimum of two years of fairly effective language preparation. In a few years, perhaps five, it should be possible to count on the students' having three effective years of language study before entering college. And in another few years, perhaps five more, it should be possible to count on students' having a minimum of four effective years of language instruction before entering college. And of course colleges and universities can exercise an effective role in helping to bring about this desirable end.

I don't believe that it falls within the scope of this paper to provide the blueprint of an ideal FL major program. Rather, it would seem appropriate to consider questions of policy and to suggest a flexible framework within which the individual college can work according to its resources while cooperating with others in the formation of a uniform national policy, perhaps with the help of the Modern Language Association.

The following may provide topics for discussion. To what extent should the college language department provide motivation and perspective for its major students, as indeed for all its students? In my opinion, one of the chief functions of the language department should be to provide such motivation. This does not mean temporary, artificial stimulation or the introduction of Madison Avenue techniques on the academic scene, but it does mean staffing language departments with teachers enthusiastically committed to their profession, whose example will be contagious. As to perspective, this requires of teachers rather more awareness of the relation of language learning to the world today than they have had in the past.

How can a college language department build more effectively on the students' previous language learning experience, acquired both in and out of school? If two years or the equivalent are offered for admission, they should be validated by a language qualification test, which normally equates the proficiency with that acquired at the end of two semesters in college and the college programs should start from this point. The student who has had three years of preparation should be able to demonstrate an achievement equal to that obtained during three semesters in college. Likewise a student offering four entrance units should normally have the equivalent of four semesters in college. In general, in the lower division (freshman and sophomore years) the basic linguistic skills should be brought to a high degree of mastery and a sound foundation be laid for advanced literary and cultural study. These in turn would be emphasized in the upper division (junior and senior years) when the student would put in approximately half of his time in a study in depth and breadth of the literature and culture of the language being studied, possibly supported by related studies in another language or literature. Both the contemporary and the historical aspects of this study should be emphasized.

It is of great importance that a reasonable achievement of a language major be defined and that this definition be revised from time to time, perhaps by a commission established for this purpose by the Modern Language Association of America. The principle of proficiency, no matter how acquired, should be emphasized until it is widely recognized as preferable to a system of hours and credits. At the same time, tests will have to be used to measure such proficiency as objectively as possible. Presumably, the tests now in process of development by the MLA will serve this purpose.

CONCLUSION

Colleges and universities have a direct interest in working closely with schools, both elementary and secondary, in order that FL programs be fully articulated from beginning to end. Colleges and universities should encourage, whenever conditions are favorable, an early start in language learning by as many young Americans as possible, steady progression in long sequences of FL study, and foreign experience. The principle of proficiency rather than credits should be eternally emphasized. And finally, the feasibility of asking the MLA to establish a commission on the FL major to guide and coordinate efforts at improvements in this field should be carefully studied.

UNDERGRADUATE PREPARATION OF THE FUTURE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER

BY NELSON BROOKS, *Yale University*

1. The future foreign language teacher will of course major in a modern foreign language. It is an asset also to have a college course or courses in a classical language.

2. As a major in one of the commonly taught languages, the student will surely be well prepared in the field of its literature. In addition, attention should be given to the selection of courses that will provide knowledge of its history, culture, and civilization as well as some knowledge of the history of its language.

3. It is recommended that the student take a course that might be entitled: "Introduction to general linguistics" provided that in such a course he gains an understanding of the structure of his mother tongue and of the language he intends to teach that will directly benefit him in his future work in the classroom.

4. Courses in English literature are of value; equally important would be a course in the structure of English or in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

5. Rather than prepare to teach two different languages or even three, a student is well advised to put his major effort on the perfection of a single foreign language, turning next to the teaching of English (especially to foreigners) as a second area of preparation. If the teaching of a modern language is to be coupled with that of an additional subject, it is probably better that it be Latin or English rather than another contemporary language (unless some special circumstance in the student's background gives him an unusual advantage).

6. For any student there is value in a program of studies carried on in another country. The junior year or a graduate year spent in the country whose language the student intends to teach is a very important aid in the development of audio-lingual skills and of cultural insight and understanding.

7. Many campuses provide opportunities for a language experience on the stage, in clubs, and in language houses. These should never be neglected by the prospective teacher.

8. Those who look forward to teaching should take advantage of any formal practice that is afforded in oral speech and in public speaking.

9. Provision should be made for prospective teachers to visit classes at various levels of advancement, at differing age levels, and in a variety of institutions. Some coaching as to what to look for and comments on observations made should be provided.

10. A program should be devised to aid the starry-eyed neophyte in deciding whether or not he really wishes to prepare for this profession. Such a program would enable him to try his hand at preparing a lesson plan for a class, teaching it, reading a set of written exercises and evaluating the students' performance in the various skills.

11. There are certain areas of psychology that can contribute significantly to effective teaching of modern foreign languages. Specifically, a student is well advised to take a semester or two of general psychology. In addition, it would be helpful if a student were to have a semester in the psychology of learning, in human growth and development, or in adolescent psychology.

12. For certification in public schools certain "professional" courses are generally required. They are usually entitled as follows: The History of Education. The Philosophy of Education. Educational Psychology. Secondary School Education. Where such courses are strengthened by sufficient reference to the discipline referred to, such as history or philosophy or psychology, they have a legitimate place in a liberal arts curriculum, and one or more such courses may well become a part of the student's undergraduate preparation.

13. A general course in Cultural Anthropology will help the student orient himself in a neighboring discipline that is becoming increasingly important for the FL teacher.

TRAINING THE NEW COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR

BY NORMAN P. SACKS, *Oberlin College*

THE PROBLEM

Language institutes provided for in Title VI of the National Defense Education Act are designed to upgrade the linguistic competence of secondary school teachers of modern foreign languages and to bring them in touch with new methods and new instructional materials. The MLA has published a widely disseminated and influential statement of qualifications for secondary school teachers of modern foreign languages, with provision of three levels of competence in seven areas. And whatever we may think of the approved standards of certification, the fact remains that State Departments of Public Instruction have set minimal requirements for the certification of teachers of modern foreign languages on the secondary school level.

When we turn our attention from the secondary school to the college and university, what do we find? The college instructor or teaching assistant, who may, according to one estimate, teach about one-third of the college language classes, and who has under his influence active or prospective language majors who will become secondary school and college teachers of modern foreign languages, is given no opportunity through language institutes to improve his competence. Neither the MLA nor any other organization to my knowledge has spelled out the qualifications which he must possess for his job. Furthermore, there are no minimal standards or certifying body he must satisfy. If he is a product of a fundamentally literary training in a graduate school, he is entrusted with first- and second-year language courses in the best of our liberal arts colleges. And if he is a graduate student working toward an advanced degree, he is entrusted with first- and second-year language courses at some of the best of our universities. If anyone cares to read penetrating analyses of this system of language instruction, let him have a look at Dwight Bolinger's article, "Are We Playing Fair with Our Students Linguistically?" (*Hispania*, XXXIV, 1951, 131-136) and Ernst Pulgram's paper, "Preparation for Language Teaching" (published in the Georgetown University monograph of July 1954, *Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*).

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The suggestions made in this paper for training the new college instructor or teaching assistant are based upon the following assumptions:

1. Graduate schools must recognize their responsibility for training college teachers as well as researchers; consequently, the provision of a thorough training in language and language teaching for our graduate assistants and young instructors, accompanied by close supervision, is essential to our profession.

2. Growing attention to the improvement of high school teaching of modern languages and continued inattention to the need for improving col-

lege teaching may, if permitted to continue indefinitely, produce a situation where high school teachers will be better prepared for their job than college teachers for theirs, and the high school could in time become the repository of the "new key," while the college will remain the custodian of the old.

3. Graduate programs in modern foreign languages must be organized not only with the needs of linguistic and literary researchers in mind, but also with the realization that a large proportion of language teaching done by young (and even older) Ph.D.'s is at the elementary and intermediate levels. The majority of students in modern language departments are found in first- and second-year courses, and the effectiveness of advanced programs in language and literature, whether on the undergraduate or on the graduate levels, ultimately depends upon the foundation built at the earlier stages of language study. The importance of providing excellently trained instructors for these courses derives not only from our responsibility to the majority of our students but also from our concern for the health and vitality of the language teaching profession.

4. Effective teaching of first- and second-year language courses in college requires a high degree of competence, and cannot be dismissed as drudgery, whose chief *raison d'être* is that of subsidizing graduate students.

5. The great majority of graduate students in modern foreign languages are given a training almost exclusively literary, though virtually all of their teaching as graduate assistants and most of their teaching as regular faculty members later on involves language courses. This is said with all due respect to the great value of a literary training and with the recognition that a training entirely linguistic would be as undersirable a solution as a training entirely literary has been an undesirable practice. It is obvious, therefore, that if a thorough training in linguistics does not in itself guarantee competence in teaching literature courses, a thorough training in literature does not in itself guarantee competence in teaching a language.

6. Colleges and universities can ill afford to be revolutionary in their summer language programs and institutes for high school teachers, and lapse into "business as usual" complacency during the academic year.

7. If the MLA Statement of Qualifications for Secondary School Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages specifies *seven* areas of competence for the high school level, no fewer than seven can be required on the college level as well.

8. It seems reasonable to ask that graduate departments of modern foreign languages prepare prospective college instructors for the kind of academic life they will, in all likelihood, be leading.

SOME SUGGESTIONS AS TO PROGRAM

In view of the requirements for doing an effective job in the field of college teaching at various levels, but with special attention to elementary and intermediate courses, the training of the new college instructor or teaching assistant should be organized with the following objectives in mind:

1. Development of skills in aural comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing to the superior level as described in the MLA Statement of Qualifications for Secondary School Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. This means that we must concentrate upon the attainment of proficiency and not be lulled into a false sense of security by the presence on the undergraduate transcript of courses (even with a grade of 'A') in conversation, composition, and grammar review. This means that we cannot be satisfied that the four skills (especially the first two) have probably been achieved through a summer's travel or a year's study abroad. It means that the graduate program must provide every possible resource for attaining the basic skills (e.g., intensive conversation courses, use of the language laboratory, pattern practice at the level of the student's needs, opportunities to hear news broadcasts and lectures in the foreign language, to attend plays and movies, to have informal discussions with native speakers on current events and the contemporary life of the countries where the language is spoken). And since good pronunciation and intonation are essential to aural understanding and speaking, the student should be well grounded in the phonology of the target language, with provision made for extensive drill and practice in the development of good speech habits.

2. Development of proficiency in language analysis or linguistics to the superior level as described in the MLA Statement of Qualification. This does not mean that the instructor must become a professional linguist. It does mean that his need for a knowledge of linguistics is so great, especially at the elementary and intermediate course levels where the most critical linguistic problems are encountered, that he should take a course in the structure of the target language; a course in the structure of English, inasmuch as he should be able to compare target and native languages at all points crucial for learning and teaching; a course in the syntax of the target language (unless the course in structural linguistics gives this vital area adequate coverage); courses in the history of the target language and of English in order to provide perspective and answers to certain peculiarities of linguistic structure. The well-trained prospective college instructor should be familiar with the differences between the target language as spoken and as written, between informal conversational and formal literary styles, between prescriptive and descriptive grammar. He should also be informed on such often neglected features of the target language as intonation, juncture, and word order.

3. Possession of a knowledge of the culture of the country equivalent to the superior level as described in the MLA Statement of Qualifications. Perhaps here we should remind ourselves of the fact that the training of the college instructor of modern foreign languages bridges the humanities and the social sciences, for in addition to a competent knowledge of the literature or literatures written in the foreign language, the instructor should have some knowledge of the history, geography, customs, and way of life of the people. And if the instructor of a foreign language is to some extent a comparative linguist, he is also to a certain degree a man trained in comparative literature and comparative cultures.

4. A high degree of general professional preparation, equivalent to the superior level as described in the MLA Statement of Qualifications. Whatever associations any of us may have with "methods" courses taught in some schools of education by people not thoroughly trained in the subject matter of modern languages, the fact remains that some pedagogical techniques and practices are more effective than others. If audio-visual techniques and the language laboratory can contribute to making language teaching more efficient on the high school level, they can also do so on the college level, and the instructor should have some knowledge of this area. He should also realize that modern electronic devices are as good as the linguistic materials that are recorded on them, and that providing the student extensive drill in the language laboratory with many traditional-type exercises may actually be doing his nervous system a disservice.

The instructor's general professional preparation, which is closely tied in with his training in subject matter, should acquaint him, among other things, with the following: the theory and method of construction of pattern drills; the role of memorization in the development of audio-lingual skills; the role of translation in teaching a language; the utility of standard frequency lists; the differences between a structurally oriented textbook and one traditionally oriented.

The importance of the instructor's receiving

training in the analysis and evaluation of textbooks needs to be underscored. Since the textbook is his principal instructional tool, the instructor should know how to distinguish a good one from a bad one, and how to separate the essential elements from the superficial externals.

It should be emphasized that course recommendations made throughout this paper (e.g., those involving linguistics) are flexible, but not loosely so. They may be scaled down if the graduate student's undergraduate preparation has included, for example, an introduction to linguistics and a good course or courses in the structure of English and the language which is the student's specialty. Our prime concern is proficiency, and the courses listed are suggestions designed to attain that end. In setting the superior level of the MLA Statement of Qualifications as our goal, we are not suggesting that no graduate student or instructor falling short of that level of attainment be permitted to instruct undergraduates. The superior level provides a useful yardstick to measure the competence of our instructors and instruction, even if many young instructors may not reach this goal in all seven areas for some years after graduation. Thinking which is geared to a minimal standard or a "lesser of two evils" philosophy may lead to situations where the evils from which to choose later on will become progressively worse. And in introducing suggested courses into graduate curricula which do not presently provide for them, we are not asking that the Ph.D. program be lengthened, but rather re-examined with the needs of today's college instructor in mind.

The college instructor, like the high school teacher, should have the necessary personal qualities to enhance his effectiveness as a teacher, and as broad a general education and background as possible. He will, of course, develop an area of special interest which he should be encouraged to exploit through the teaching of advanced courses and scholarly research. His program in graduate school should provide some depth as well as breadth. If his major concern is descriptive linguistics, he should be required also to take courses in historical linguistics; and if his major interest is literary criticism, he cannot permit himself the luxury of serious gaps in literary history. The linguist should be exposed to literature, and the literary man should not be permitted to escape contact with linguistics. Balance and perspective are essential, and the college instructor should have courses in at least one language and literature other than his specialty. And if one of his primary purposes in teaching is that of mediating another civilization to American students, it is essential that the instructor himself be a civilized man.